

Career Coaching Using The CODE Model™

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John is, in many ways, typical of the clients who seek out my services in support of their explorations of career options: educated, experienced, accomplished and deeply despairing because he believes that he is not good enough. He has worked hard for over 20 years, struggling to be someone who makes a difference. He has lost touch with how deeply he's learned to silence his real thoughts about what he sees happening around him. His silence is maintained in order to keep the paycheques rolling in.

Many of my clients have created a soul destroying conundrum for themselves: they work at jobs which are killing them in order to have the materialistic 'treats' which justify and numb the pain of work. They feel trapped, angry and desperate.

Recent research shows us that many experienced employees are choosing death as the pathway out of their pain. Evidence of this is research that pinpoints Monday mornings as the time of the week when most people have heart attacks. It may be unconscious, but for many people death or disability is a preferred alternative to another day at the office!

Interestingly, my typical client doesn't believe they have any choice around work. Those who have little formal education see their options as limited to unglamorous pink or blue collar jobs. Those with lots of formal education see themselves as restricted to the profession they qualified for -- and often this profession or discipline was selected to keep a parent or favorite teacher happy. Little experience is perceived as restricting opportunities, and certainly closing doors to higher level positions. Lots of experience is seen as a straightjacket which ties them to a well known path. Having a family means they have to play it safe because people are depending on them. Being single means they have to play it safe because there is no one to rely on if things don't go as planned.

And these stories (or nightmares) keep churning 'round and 'round because they think, based on years of personal evidence, that they can't change anything.

Like many of us, John learned young in life that his needs and wishes weren't important. In fact, they got him into a lot of trouble with the authority figures (parents) in his life. As he grew and went to school, that belief was reinforced. What John's teachers thought was important and was what counted. Once John

hit the work force, these lessons were further driven home. It was his boss's needs that always came first. What John thought or needed was only relevant if it matched or furthered the way his boss looked at things.

John learned to hide his real interests and needs so well that as a middle-aged man he believed he no longer had any idea of what made him happy and fed his soul. His personal life and professional life had been ruthlessly segregated. The few 'personal' activities he was enriched by were seldom discussed at work and were seen as so irrelevant to the world of commerce that they couldn't possibly be connected with earning a living.

In despair, John sought out someone who, he believed, had the answer to his dilemma. Because another message John had absorbed was that the answer is "out there" in some specialist, not in himself. He had learned to dismiss his own wisdom.

My career exploration conversations invariably begin with exploring a client's concerns about what kinds of jobs are available, what kinds of companies are hiring, what sort of salary and fringe benefits are the norm; and how far afield they'll have to go for work. In short, they are 'content' discussions dealing with the what, where and when of work. In fact, many clients arrive hoping to leave with a resume created right away so that the job search can begin.

While they do, in fact, begin their real work about career change in this first session, clients don't address their resume. More significantly, they connect with the realization that seeking answers at the level of content, such as beginning the resume, (or environment & behaviour in LeBrun's view of logical levels) will make no real difference in their experience of work.

What is needed is an exploration of who they are: clients must identify decisions that were made unconsciously in early life that are still impacting them; what gifts have they been blessed with; what assets have they accumulated so far; what is their vision for life and what mission or purpose is their life about.

The where, when and what questions are important and do have to be answered at some point, however, to begin with this would be to repeat the current patterns of their lives. Clients need to do things differently in order to see new possibilities for themselves. In other words, clients must create a new context for living.

And so our work together becomes an exploration of the context for their lives. Out of this emerges a new context, mindfully chosen, and allowing for enough change

in their thinking that space for new possibilities continue to emerge and be expressed as their life continues to unfold. They also learn the tools and skills to re-create the exploration any time they choose.

Our work together loosely follows LeBrun's approach to logical levels as presented in "Fully Alive from 9 to 5!" (p. 97) see also [Levels of Thinking and the Chakras:](#)

Personal (When, Where and With Whom?)
Circumstances (What?)

Process (How?)

Values and Attitudes (Why?)

Which?

Who?

Identity (Who Else?)

We begin by creating space for the exploration. This occurs by focussing on successes and accomplishments. In other words, a conversation about capability. Some clients such as John struggle tremendously with this. Success, they've unconsciously decided, is what other people have.

In claiming success, clients come face to face with the concept of living 'at cause'. By this, we mean owning our own power to make things happen and living with the results we achieve. Many clients begin to recognize that they've been giving their power away by choosing to live 'at effect'. In other words, they grant everyone else the power and live as victims or powerless individuals. When clients begin to notice how often they attribute their successes to "being lucky" or "being at the right place at the right time" they can then recognize that it is their own efforts which have produced the results.

In addition to noticing the language a client uses, we begin to notice the energetic responses they experience during our discussions and are able to begin to work at even deeper levels of unconscious mind processes. The client starts to notice that certain situations, people and conversations generate consistent states in their body (e.g. tension, anxiety, upset stomach, headaches, excitement, joy, etc.). Some of these states are helpful and others are decidedly unhelpful. When clients learn to notice their own body response and concurrent internal mental conversation they have acquired a powerful tool which allows them to make a

conscious and active choice to do things differently. The differences they create for themselves affect their entire future.

Once a list of successes has been elicited, clients are then able to identify an extensive list of skills, many of which they hadn't even recognized they possessed. Out of this discussion the client then identifies the skills they *enjoy* using. For many, such as Chris this allows them to see that the skills they've received public recognition and encouragement for are those valued by others, and are not necessarily valued by themselves. They begin to see that it is difficult to own their successes when that success is based on a skill that they don't enjoy using. No wonder so much of the public acknowledgment brings so little satisfaction and joy.

Chris endured years as a numbers man when his real joy came from using his hands (not his head) to solve problems. What we do well but get little fulfillment from are simply functional skills. In fact, often, the skills we enjoy using the most may have caused problems for us and we may have learned to deny them.

My own discoveries are a case in point. When I learned that the skills I most enjoy using are innovation and initiation, I knew why I had been labeled a "trouble maker" in my workplace (actually, the term used was far less complimentary!). For years and years, I chose to work in environments where continuity, stability and following orders were highly valued. My drive to 'improve' things was far from appreciated and I felt confused, rejected and resentful that my initiative wasn't supported. Once I stumbled into a job where change and variety were needed, supported and recognized, my experience of work changed dramatically. I had fun; I got promoted; my reputation soared! Had I changed? Not much. What had changed was that I'd accidentally discovered a work context that worked for me.

Our discussions about success open the window on a client's beliefs, attitudes and values. We begin to surface, in a powerful way, assumptions the clients holds about the world and their place in it. These discussions become all the more powerful when we use LeBrun's CODE model as a context for conversation. The CODE model allows huge amounts of data about information stored in the body to be surfaced. Where they place their hands during a conversation, when they hold their breath, clear their throat or comment on headaches, stomach upsets, etc. a whole new image becomes evident. Each response is used, with the client's full consent, to create a safe space where the learnings from the energy response can be processed by the unconscious mind.

This process uses a series of exercises to explore client's values and attitudes. Particular attention is paid to beliefs they carry about working for a salary (i.e. being an employee) versus being self employed. Options open up tremendously for people when they realize that their fear of starting their own business may be based on a parent's belief system, not their own! Conversely, some clients who are drained by entrepreneurship begin to see that maybe not all employers are oppressive tyrants like their favourite Aunt claimed them to be.

Very quickly clients surface the key components of the self they came to believe during their cultural conditioning. Consequently, they can mindfully choose those elements which continue to serve them well and discard those which are no longer useful.

Natalie is a client who made some powerful decisions in this regard. She is a business woman who had grown a successful cleaning business from scratch. She had great customers, great staff -- and was miserable. During our first meeting she indicated that if she were her own employee, she'd fire herself. Natalie complained of having no time and little energy. She marketed the business and assessed client properties and had developed her staff to the point that they could run the operation without her. As we talked it became clear that Natalie had a belief that work needed to be hard. Since this was no longer the case, she was making her days difficult by sitting at home for hours at a stretch fretting about how to get her light load done. Now Natalie wasn't conscious that she had this belief, nor was she consciously aware that she was making her life far more difficult than it needed to be. However, when this belief surfaced for Natalie, an electric current of insight shot through her body. She was immediately able to see that her worry time each day could be spent on more fun filled things. And it opened up a space for her to examine who she could be. After some thought and reflection, Natalie realized that her real enjoyment lay in the start up phase of a business. So she sold her mature venture and is happily building a new one.

At this point clients have created space at the level of culturally conditioned self so that they can then explore their authentic self in several scenarios. We then work with imagery, using guided visualization and pictorial story-boards to create a compelling picture of who they choose to be. By this stage, clients have recognized that spiritual support is an integral component of maintaining their authentic self and they create life plans which combine the spiritual along with personal and professional growth plans.

Clients are then able to begin to answer the what, where and when questions which brought them in initially. However, having gone through a career exploration facilitated by logical levels and the CODE model, these questions are asked and answered from a whole new level of conscious awareness. The result is powerful. People feel they have choice in their life and choose to work at careers which are gratifying and rewarding.

About Gwen McCauley: Coach, educator, writer and veteran of the 'employee to entrepreneur' transformation process. With wit, wisdom and worldly experience, Gwen invites her clients on a journey of self-discovery, gaining clarity of purpose and increasing self-awareness and resourcefulness. Gwen brings a strong background as a corporate executive with extensive management experience to her work. She founded Odysseys Unlimited Inc. (OUI) in 1997 and is a co-founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute. Gwen has an MA in Human Systems Intervention from Concordia University and a successful track record as a coach, program leader and businesswoman. In addition to being a WEL-Systems Educator™, CODE Model™ Coach and Quantum TLC™ Facilitator, Gwen has studied Open Space Technology, Myers Briggs, Appreciative Inquiry, Generative Leadership and Total Quality Management. Gwen published her first book *"The Alchemy of Energy: Exploring The CODE Model"* in 2004 and co-authored *"Sekhmet Rising: the restlessness of women's genius"* with 17 other women in 2006. She is currently working on her third book.

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